584 woman sends them to her family. Distant relatives fulfill their obligations by bringing meat or fish, and nowadays also money or some small present, which is not included in the bride price.

The husband's gifts consist of a small knife and a few (5) arrows (at the time of the Independent State a bundle of copper wires called nngelo or mitako and at the present time 5 or 10 francs, for example). These presents from the husband are not bosambelo, for he does not give his fiancée his hand; they are yékola (greeting) and are not part of the bride price. The woman sends them to her parents.

591 If the husband does not yet have a house or cultivated fields of his own, [138] as was formerly often the case, (1) the engaged couple

[736]

1. Orphans were almost the only ones who had their own houses and cultivated fields. Of course, we are not speaking of men who were previously married.

live in the hut of the parents for the time being. The woman obtains food from her mother-in-law's fields and prepares it at the hearth of the latter, until the young man has built his hut and established his own fields.

Nowadays it no longer happens that a young man who wants to take a wife still lacks his own house. From the time of puberty on, young men moved by the desire for freedom leave the parental home and build huts for themselves where they can live alone or with some companion or other and enjoy their freedom.

6. The life of the engaged couple

584 The bompáka lives in the home of her husband, goes there to talk to him and to sleep with him. During the first three or four days she does not work, unless she is a very active person. Subsequently she takes care of all the household tasks and prepares meals at the hearth under the supervision of her mother-in-law. Only after a few weeks, when she has become accustomed to her new way of living, is she introduced to the customs of her new family; only

consists of a beautifully fashioned native knife, or a lance, or mitako [copper wire used as currency]. In some areas, it was the polygynist who attended the mother at the birth of the daughter. He had the wood gathered, water brought, and food prepared. If, then, the expected child was a boy, the security was usually returned, and the contract declared null and void. If, however, the one who had given the security was a village chief or a man of importance, then the father of the child tried to give him another daughter. The father had, for instance, at an earlier time given a daughter to another man of much less importance. In the above-mentioned case, he would give back the bride price received, take his daughter back, and give her to the polygynist from whom he expected a larger bride price.

Sometimes too the boy was taken by the polygynist and remained in his family until the father could trade a daughter for him.

While very young and still a child, the little daughter was installed in the harem of the polygynist. She was brought up there, together with other children of her age and status; or rather, she grew up there in the midst of those heathen customs without any upbringing.

The composition of the harem of a polygamist:

The first wife was called the Bomatsa; she preceded all the other wives in rank, and in the absence of the polygynist, she was the mistress of the harem.

The second wife was called Ekila; she was the most loved and preceded all the remaining wives. She was also called Nkonda.

The third wife was called Bolumbu. At the appointment of the Bolumbu, a certain ceremony took place, and the wife was clothed with an animal skin. The Nku, a sort of patriarch and magician, sometimes had three or four Bolumbu who served as messengers to other villages. In this capacity they had special privileges. For instance, to attack a Bolumbu was a reason for declaring war.

[533] The remaining women were simply women of the harem, without distinction.

In the area of Monjoku, among the Bolee [Bole], the first wife was called Nkisa, with the same rank as Bomatsa. The second